

Senate Bill No. 1548

CHAPTER 467

An act to amend Sections 801, 4800, 4804.5, 4832, 4833, 4842.2, 4842.5, 4848, and 4875.4 of, and to add Section 4830.7 to, the Business and Professions Code, relating to veterinary medicine, and making an appropriation therefor.

[Approved by Governor September 10, 2004. Filed
with Secretary of State September 10, 2004.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1548, Figueroa. Veterinary medicine.

(1) Existing law requires, with specified exceptions, every insurer providing professional liability insurance to a person who holds a license, certificate, or similar authority from certain agencies to send a complete report to those agencies as to any settlement or arbitration award, as specified.

This bill would require every insurer providing liability insurance to a licensed veterinarian to send a complete report to the Veterinary Medical Board of any settlement or arbitration award over \$10,000.

(2) Existing law, the Veterinary Medical Practice Act, provides for licensing and regulation of veterinarians and other related persons by the Veterinary Medical Board of California. Existing law provides that all fees collected on behalf of the board are to be credited to the Veterinary Medical Board Contingent Fund, which is a continually appropriated fund. Existing law, until July 1, 2005, provides for the board to consist of 7 members, and authorizes the board to appoint an executive officer exempt from civil service. Existing law requires the board to establish the Registered Veterinary Technician Committee, which is an advisory committee in issues pertaining to the practice of veterinary technicians. Existing law authorizes the committee to assist the board in the examination of applicants for veterinary technician registration. A violation of the Veterinary Medical Practice Act is a crime.

This bill would extend the operation of the provisions establishing the board and authorizing the appointment of an executive officer to July 1, 2009. The bill would require any person licensed under the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act, when the person has reasonable cause to believe an animal under his or her care has been a victim of animal abuse or cruelty, to promptly report the animal abuse or cruelty to the appropriate law enforcement authority. The bill would require the committee to advise the board in the examination of applicants for veterinary

technician registration. The bill would require the committee to advise the board in the inspection and approval of schools or institutions offering a curriculum for training registered veterinary technicians. The bill would authorize the committee to advise and assist the board in developing regulations on various matters. The bill would authorize the board to extend a temporary license for up to one year for reasons of health, military service, or undue hardship. The bill would authorize the board to increase specified fees for filing an application for examination under the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act. The bill would authorize the board to establish a fee, not to exceed \$300, for the registered veterinary technician examination. Because fees from these examinations would be deposited in the Veterinary Medical Board Contingent Fund, which is continuously appropriated, the bill would make an appropriation. Because a violation of these provisions of the bill would be a crime, it would impose a state-mandated local program.

(3) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

Appropriation: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 801 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

801. (a) Every insurer providing professional liability insurance to a person who holds a license, certificate, or similar authority from or under any agency mentioned in subdivision (a) of Section 800 (except as provided in subdivisions (b), (c), (d), and (e)) shall send a complete report to that agency as to any settlement or arbitration award over three thousand dollars (\$3,000) of a claim or action for damages for death or personal injury caused by that person's negligence, error, or omission in practice, or by his or her rendering of unauthorized professional services. The report shall be sent within 30 days after the written settlement agreement has been reduced to writing and signed by all parties thereto or within 30 days after service of the arbitration award on the parties.

(b) Every insurer providing professional liability insurance to a physician and surgeon licensed pursuant to Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 2000) or the Osteopathic Initiative Act shall send a complete report to the Medical Board of California or the Osteopathic Medical Board of California, as appropriate, as to any settlement over thirty



thousand dollars (\$30,000); or arbitration award of any amount; or civil judgment of any amount, whether or not vacated by a settlement after entry of the judgment, that was not reversed on appeal; of a claim or action for damages for death or personal injury caused by that person's negligence, error, or omission in practice, or by his or her rendering of unauthorized professional services. A settlement over thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) shall also be reported if the settlement is based on the licensee's negligence, error, or omission in practice, or by the licensee's rendering of unauthorized professional services, and a party to the settlement is a corporation, medical group, partnership, or other corporate entity in which the licensee has an ownership interest or that employs or contracts with the licensee. The report shall be sent within 30 days after the written settlement agreement has been reduced to writing and signed by all parties thereto, within 30 days after service of the arbitration award on the parties, or within 30 days after the date of entry of the civil judgment.

(c) Every insurer providing professional liability insurance to a person licensed pursuant to Chapter 13 (commencing with Section 4980) or Chapter 14 (commencing with Section 4990) shall send a complete report to the Board of Behavioral Science Examiners as to any settlement or arbitration award over ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) of a claim or action for damages for death or personal injury caused by that person's negligence, error, or omission in practice, or by his or her rendering of unauthorized professional services. The report shall be sent within 30 days after the written settlement agreement has been reduced to writing and signed by all parties thereto or within 30 days after service of the arbitration award on the parties.

(d) Every insurer providing professional liability insurance to a dentist licensed pursuant to Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 1600) shall send a complete report to the Dental Board of California as to any settlement or arbitration award over ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) of a claim or action for damages for death or personal injury caused by that person's negligence, error, or omission in practice, or rendering of unauthorized professional services. The report shall be sent within 30 days after the written settlement agreement has been reduced to writing and signed by all parties thereto or within 30 days after service of the arbitration award on the parties.

(e) Every insurer providing liability insurance to a veterinarian licensed pursuant to Chapter 60 (commencing with Section 4825) shall send a complete report to the Veterinary Medical Board of any settlement or arbitration award over ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) of a claim or action for damages for death or injury caused by that person's negligence, error, or omission in practice, or rendering of unauthorized



professional service. The report shall be sent within 30 days after the written settlement agreement has been reduced to writing and signed by all parties thereto or within 30 days after service of the arbitration award on the parties.

(f) The insurer shall notify the claimant, or if the claimant is represented by counsel, the insurer shall notify the claimant's attorney, that the report required by subdivision (a), (b), (c), or (d) has been sent to the agency. If the attorney has not received this notice within 45 days after the settlement was reduced to writing and signed by all of the parties, the arbitration award was served on the parties, or the date of entry of the civil judgment, the attorney shall make the report to the agency.

(g) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no insurer shall enter into a settlement without the written consent of the insured, except that this prohibition shall not void any settlement entered into without that written consent. The requirement of written consent shall only be waived by both the insured and the insurer. This section shall only apply to a settlement on a policy of insurance executed or renewed on or after January 1, 1971.

SEC. 2. Section 4800 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

4800. There is in the Department of Consumer Affairs a Veterinary Medical Board in which the administration of this chapter is vested. The board consists of seven members, three of whom shall be public members.

This section shall become inoperative on July 1, 2009, and, as of January 1, 2010, is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, which becomes effective on or before January 1, 2010, deletes or extends the dates on which it becomes inoperative and is repealed.

The repeal of this section renders the board subject to the review provided for by Division 1.2 (commencing with Section 473).

SEC. 3. Section 4804.5 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

4804.5. The board may appoint a person exempt from civil service who shall be designated as an executive officer and who shall exercise the powers and perform the duties delegated by the board and vested in him or her by this chapter.

This section shall become inoperative on July 1, 2009, and, as of January 1, 2010, is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, which becomes effective on or before January 1, 2010, deletes or extends the dates on which it becomes inoperative and is repealed.

SEC. 4. Section 4830.7 is added to the Business and Professions Code, to read:



4830.7. Whenever any licensee under this chapter has reasonable cause to believe an animal under its care has been a victim of animal abuse or cruelty, as prescribed in Section 597 of the Penal Code, it shall be the duty of the licensee to promptly report it to the appropriate law enforcement authorities of the county, city, or city and county in which it occurred. No licensee shall incur any civil liability as a result of making any report pursuant to this section or as a result of making any report of a violation of subdivisions (a), (b), and (c) of Section 597 of the Penal Code.

SEC. 5. Section 4832 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

4832. (a) The board shall establish an advisory committee on issues pertaining to the practice of veterinary technicians, that shall be known as the Registered Veterinary Technician Committee, hereafter referred to as the committee.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the Veterinary Medical Board, in implementing this article, give specific consideration to the recommendations of the Registered Veterinary Technician Committee.

SEC. 6. Section 4833 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

4833. (a) The committee shall advise and may assist the board in the examination of applicants for veterinary technician registration. The examination shall be held at least once a year at the times and places designated by the board.

(b) The committee may investigate and evaluate each applicant applying for registration as a registered veterinary technician and may recommend to the board for final determination the admission of the applicant to the examination and eligibility for registration.

(c) The committee may make recommendations to the board regarding the establishment and operation of the continuing education requirements authorized by Section 4838 of this article.

(d) The committee shall advise and may assist the board in the inspection and approval of all schools or institutions offering a curriculum for training registered veterinary technicians.

(e) The committee may advise and assist the board in developing regulations to establish animal health care tasks and the appropriate degree of supervision required for those tasks for registered veterinary technicians and for unregistered assistants.

(f) The committee may advise and assist the board in developing regulations to define subdivision (c) of Section 4840, including, but not limited to, procedures for citations and fines, in accordance with Section 125.9.



SEC. 7. Section 4842.2 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

4842.2. All funds collected by the board under this article shall be deposited in the Veterinary Medical Board Contingent Fund.

SEC. 8. Section 4842.5 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

4842.5. The amount of fees prescribed by this article is that fixed by the following schedule:

(a) The fee for filing an application for examination shall be set by the board in an amount it determines is reasonably necessary to provide sufficient funds to carry out the purposes of this chapter, not to exceed two hundred dollars (\$200).

(b) The fee for the California registered veterinary technician examination shall be set by the board in an amount it determines is reasonably necessary to provide sufficient funds to carry out the purposes of this chapter, not to exceed three hundred dollars (\$300).

(c) The initial registration fee shall be set by the board at not more than one hundred dollars (\$100), except that, if the license is issued less than one year before the date on which it will expire, then the fee shall be set by the board at not more than fifty dollars (\$50). The board may adopt regulations to provide for the waiver or refund of the initial registration fee where the registration is issued less than 45 days before the date on which it will expire.

(d) The biennial renewal fee shall be set by the board at not more than one hundred dollars (\$100).

(e) The delinquency fee shall be twenty-five dollars (\$25).

(f) Any charge made for duplication or other services shall be set at the cost of rendering the services.

(g) The fee for filing an application for approval of a school pursuant to Section 4843 shall be set by the board at an amount not to exceed the cost of the approval process.

SEC. 9. Section 4848 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

4848. (a) (1) The board shall, by means of examination, ascertain the professional qualifications of all applicants for licenses to practice veterinary medicine in this state and shall issue a license to every person whom it finds to be qualified. No license shall be issued to anyone who has not demonstrated his or her competency by examination.

(2) The examination shall consist of each of the following:

(A) A licensing examination that is administered on a national basis.

(B) A California state board examination.

(C) An examination concerning those statutes and regulations of the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act administered by the board. The



examination shall be administered by mail and provided to applicants within 10 to 20 days of eligibility determination. The board shall have 10 to 20 days from the date of receipt to process the examination and provide candidates with the results of the examination. The applicant shall certify that he or she personally completed the examination. Any false statement is a violation subject to Section 4831. University of California and Western University of Health Sciences veterinary medical students who have successfully completed a board approved course on veterinary law and ethics covering the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act shall be exempt from this provision.

(3) The examinations may be given at the same time or at different times as determined by the board. For examination purposes, the board may make contractual arrangements on a sole source basis with organizations furnishing examination material as it may deem desirable and shall be exempt from Section 10115 of the Public Contract Code.

(4) The licensing examination may be waived by the board in any case in which it determines that the applicant has taken and passed an examination for licensure in another state substantially equivalent in scope and subject matter to the licensing examination last given in California before the determination is made, and has achieved a score on the out-of-state examination at least equal to the score required to pass the licensing examination administered in California.

(5) Nothing in this chapter shall preclude the board from permitting a person who has completed a portion of his or her educational program, as determined by the board, in a veterinary college recognized by the board under Section 4846 to take any examination or any part thereof prior to satisfying the requirements for application for a license established by Section 4846.

(b) The board shall waive the examination requirements of subdivision (a), and issue a temporary license valid for one year to an applicant to practice veterinary medicine under the supervision of another licensed California veterinarian in good standing if the applicant meets all of the following requirements and would not be denied issuance of a license by any other provision of this code:

(1) The applicant holds a current valid license in good standing in another state, Canadian province, or United States territory and has practiced clinical veterinary medicine for a minimum of four years full time within the five years immediately preceding filing an application for licensure in this state. Experience obtained while participating in an American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) accredited institution's internship, residency, or specialty board training program shall be valid for meeting the minimum experience requirement.



The term “in good standing” means that an applicant under this section:

(A) Is not currently under investigation nor has been charged with an offense for any act substantially related to the practice of veterinary medicine by any public agency, nor entered into any consent agreement or subject to an administrative decision that contains conditions placed by an agency upon an applicant’s professional conduct or practice, including any voluntary surrender of license, nor been the subject of an adverse judgment resulting from the practice of veterinary medicine that the board determines constitutes evidence of a pattern of incompetence or negligence.

(B) Has no physical or mental impairment related to drugs or alcohol, and has not been found mentally incompetent by a physician so that the applicant is unable to undertake the practice of veterinary medicine in a manner consistent with the safety of a patient or the public.

(2) At the time of original licensure, the applicant passed the national licensing requirement in veterinary science with a passing score or scores on the examination or examinations equal to or greater than the passing score required to pass the national licensing examination or examinations administered in this state.

(3) The applicant has either graduated from a veterinary college recognized by the board under Section 4846 or possesses a certificate issued by the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG).

(4) The applicant passes an examination concerning the statutes and regulations of the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act, administered by the board, pursuant to subparagraph (C) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (a).

(5) The applicant agrees to complete an approved educational curriculum on regionally specific and important diseases and conditions during the period of temporary licensure. The board, in consultation with the California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), shall approve educational curricula that cover appropriate regionally specific and important diseases and conditions that are common in California. The curricula shall focus on small and large animal diseases consistent with the current proportion of small and large animal veterinarians practicing in the state. The approved curriculum shall not exceed 30 hours of educational time. The board shall approve a curriculum as soon as practical, but not later than June 1, 1999. The approved curriculum may be offered by multiple providers so that it is widely accessible to candidates licensed under this subdivision.

(c) Upon receipt of acknowledgment of successful completion of the requirements set forth in subdivision (b), the board shall issue a license to the applicant. Any applicant who does not meet the requirements of



subdivision (b) shall take a California state board examination as specified in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (a).

(d) The board, in its discretion, may extend the expiration date of a temporary license issued pursuant to subdivision (b) for not more than one year for reasons of health, military service, or undue hardship. An application for an extension shall be submitted on a form provided by the board.

SEC. 10. Section 4875.4 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

4875.4. (a) The board shall, in the manner prescribed in Section 4808, adopt regulations covering the assessment of civil penalties under this article which give due consideration to the appropriateness of the penalty with respect to the following factors:

- (1) The gravity of the violation.
- (2) The good faith of the person being charged.
- (3) The history of previous violations.

(b) In no event shall the civil penalty for each citation issued be assessed in an amount greater than five thousand dollars (\$5,000).

(c) Regulations adopted by the board shall be pursuant to the procedures for citations and fines in accordance with Section 125.9.

SEC. 11. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.

